

Montana Economy at a Glance

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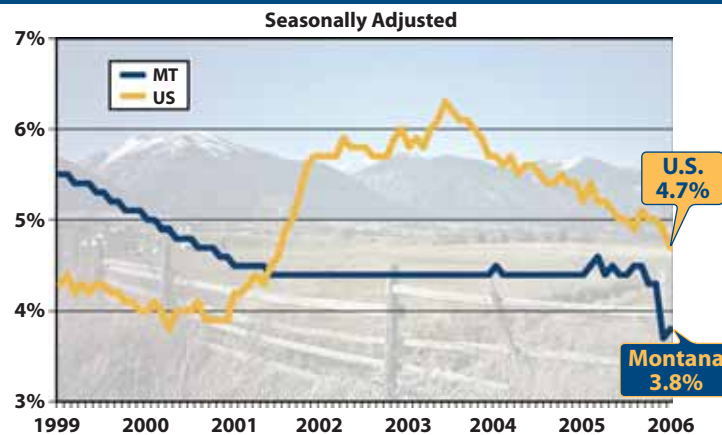
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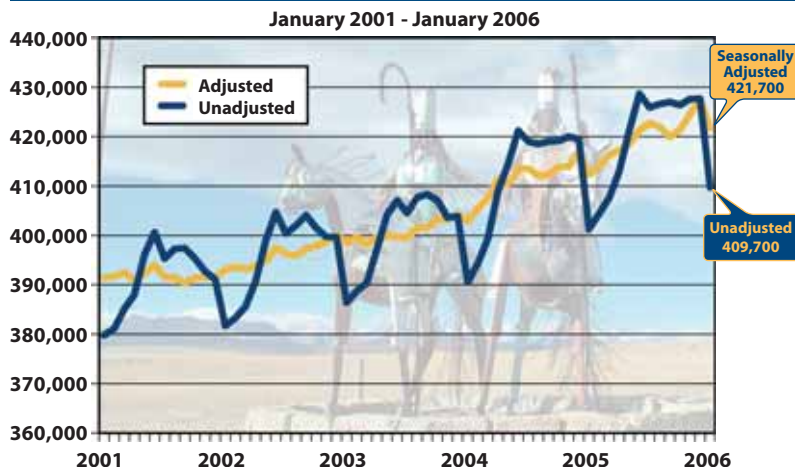
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS BUREAU
WORKFORCE SERVICES DIVISION
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

Unemployment Rate



Montana's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate rose slightly to 3.8% in January 2006 from 3.7% in December. The U.S. unemployment rate decreased to 4.7% from 4.9% over the month.

Nonfarm Employment



Montana's seasonally-adjusted nonagricultural payroll employment was down 3,100 jobs (-0.7%) over the month for January 2006. The largest changes were in Construction, which was down by 700 jobs (-2.5%); Other Services, down 600 jobs (-3.6%); and Total Government, down 400 jobs (-0.5%).

COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Not Seasonally Adjusted

	Jan. 2006	Jan. 2005		Jan. 2006	Jan. 2005		Jan. 2006	Jan. 2005
UNITED STATES	5.1%	5.7%	Judith Basin	5.1%	6.1%	Stillwater	3.8%	4.2%
MONTANA	4.9%	5.5%	Lake	7.0%	7.5%	Sweet Grass	2.2%	2.5%
			Lewis & Clark	4.4%	4.9%	Teton	4.2%	5.1%
Beaverhead	4.8%	4.5%	Liberty	4.5%	6.0%	Toole	3.2%	4.0%
Big Horn	9.4%	11.0%	Lincoln	10.2%	11.4%	Treasure	5.2%	5.7%
Blaine	4.8%	5.9%	McCone	4.3%	4.8%	Valley	4.7%	5.7%
Broadwater	4.5%	5.6%	Madison	4.3%	5.0%	Wheatland	5.7%	6.8%
Carbon	4.3%	4.7%	Meagher	5.6%	7.0%	Wibaux	4.5%	3.9%
Carter	4.1%	3.8%	Mineral	8.3%	8.7%	Yellowstone	3.7%	4.3%
Cascade	4.6%	5.3%	Missoula	4.7%	4.9%			
Chouteau	4.1%	4.7%	Musselshell	5.7%	7.1%			
Custer	4.8%	5.7%	Park	4.9%	5.5%			
Daniels	4.1%	4.7%	Petroleum	6.9%	7.4%			
Dawson	4.0%	4.5%	Phillips	5.4%	6.4%			
Deer Lodge	7.3%	7.9%	Pondera	5.0%	6.1%			
Fallon	3.2%	3.3%	Powder River	4.5%	5.4%			
Fergus	6.8%	7.7%	Powell	7.2%	7.8%			
Flathead	5.7%	6.8%	Prairie	5.5%	7.0%			
Gallatin	3.1%	3.7%	Ravalli	6.2%	7.4%			
Garfield	6.4%	6.6%	Richland	3.5%	3.7%			
Glacier	7.9%	9.1%	Roosevelt	6.8%	8.1%			
Golden Valley	3.9%	5.9%	Rosebud	7.3%	6.4%			
Granite	5.7%	6.8%	Sanders	8.0%	9.4%			
Hill	5.2%	5.7%	Sheridan	4.6%	4.8%			
Jefferson	5.4%	4.9%	Silver Bow	5.5%	5.6%			

Metropolitan Statistical Areas

Billings	3.7%	4.3%
Great Falls	4.6%	5.3%
Missoula	4.7%	4.9%

Micropolitan Statistical Areas

Bozeman	3.1%	3.7%
Butte-Silver Bow	5.5%	5.6%
Havre	5.2%	5.7%
Helena	4.5%	4.9%
Kalispell	5.7%	6.8%

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Seasonally Adjusted - Over-the-month change

Industry Employment (in thousands)	Jan. 2006	Dec. 2005	Net Change	Percent Change
Total Non-Agricultural	421.7	424.8	-3.1	-0.7%
Natural Resources & Mining	8.0	8.0	0.0	0.0%
Construction	27.5	28.2	-0.7	-2.5%
Manufacturing	19.2	19.2	0.0	0.0%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	87.9	88.0	-0.1	-0.1%
Information*	7.7	7.8	-0.1	-1.3%
Financial Activities	21.5	21.8	-0.3	-1.4%
Professional & Business Services	34.6	34.7	-0.1	-0.3%
Education & Health Services*	57.1	57.2	-0.1	-0.2%
Leisure & Hospitality	55.4	55.6	-0.2	-0.4%
Other Services*	16.4	17.0	-0.6	-3.6%
Total Government	86.9	87.3	-0.4	-0.5%

*These series are not seasonally adjusted.

RECENT CHANGES

Beginning with the January 2006 issue, the *Montana Economy at a Glance* will begin reporting over-the-month changes in seasonally adjusted employment data, rather than over-the-year changes in unadjusted data. This change will allow for easier comparison with national data, which is also reported using seasonally adjusted data. It will also allow for more timely detection of underlying economic trends, while filtering out normal seasonal movements in the data. Unadjusted employment data will remain available on our website.

We will continue to publish unadjusted unemployment rates for Montana's counties and statistical areas, since no adjusted rates are produced. Additionally, the Research and Analysis Bureau will no longer produce revised unemployment numbers.

Economy at a Glance Survey Results

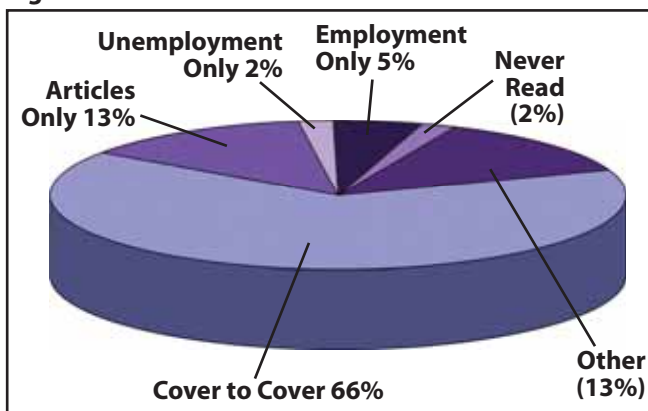
Last October, we began a readership survey for *Economy at a Glance* (EAG). Our goal was to learn what parts of the publication our readers find useful, and what could be improved. The results have been compiled and, as promised, we now present them to you.

The Questions:

Classify yourself as a reader of *Economy at a Glance*.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (66%) classified themselves as “Cover-to-Cover” readers. Of those who reported reading only certain sections, 13% read only the articles, 5% read only the employment information, and 2% read only the unemployment rate data. Of the remaining respondents, 13% classified themselves as “Other,” while 2% reported never having read the publication at all. This makes sense, as those who never read the publication won’t be as inclined to fill out a survey on it, while cover-to-cover readers are the most likely to voice their opinions on the publication.

Figure 1.



Rate your overall impression.

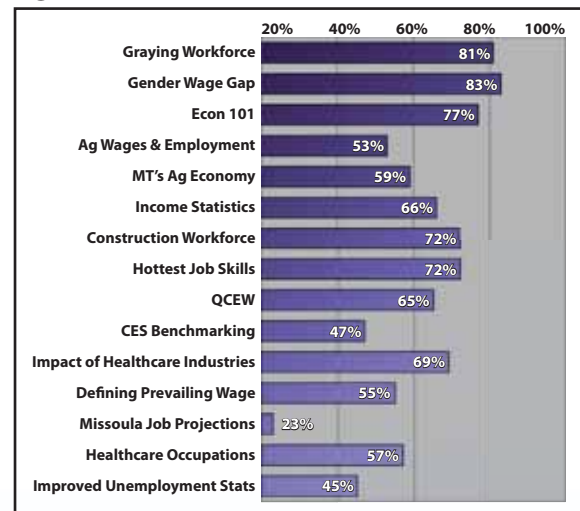
Half of all respondents rated the EAG an “excellent” publication, while 43% said it was “good.” The remaining 7% rated the publication as “average.” “Poor” was also a choice, but received a 0% response rate.

Rate our featured articles.

Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents who rated each article as either “very interesting” or “somewhat interesting.” In the graph, articles are listed in chronological order, showing a significant increase in interest for the most

recent articles. *Gender Wage Gaps: Factors and Fiction* received the highest rating, with 83% of respondents rating it as either “very” or “somewhat interesting.” This article was followed closely by *The Economic Consequences of Montana’s Graying Workforce* (at 81%), and *Econ 101: Supply, Demand, & Price* (at 77%). By far, the least popular article was *Projected Missoula County Jobs by Industry: 2002-2012*, with a rating of 23%, which may be due to the article’s very specific regional focus. The article that received the highest “very interesting” rating (rather than the “very” and “somewhat interesting” categories combined) was the March 2005 featured article: *Montana’s Hottest Job Skills*. It is important to note, however, that the older articles received much higher response rates in the “Didn’t see this article” category. The more recent articles may have received wider exposure since we began featuring them prominently on our home page.

Figure 2.



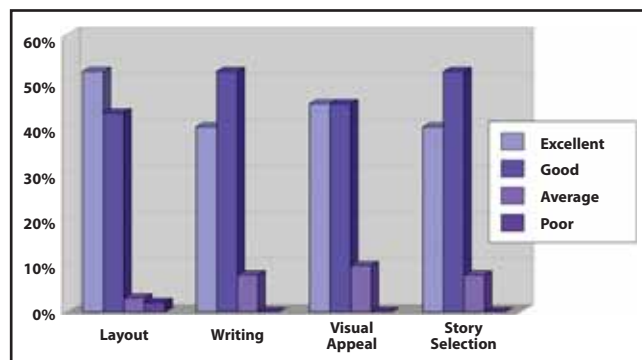
Rate our content sections.

The most popular feature of *Economy at a Glance* appears to be the feature articles, in which 75% of respondents said they were “Very Interested.” Unemployment by county received the second highest rating, at 72%, followed by Employment by Industry (63%), Nonfarm Employment (58%), and Unemployment by Statistical Area (54%).

Rate the Economy at a Glance by its traits.

This question asked readers to rate the EAG on its overall layout, writing skills, visual appeal, and story selection. Overall Layout received the most “Excellent” responses, at 52%, followed by Visual Appeal at 45%, Writing Skills at 40%, and Story Selection, also at 40%. The only trait to receive “Poor” ratings was Overall Layout, at 2%

Figure 3.



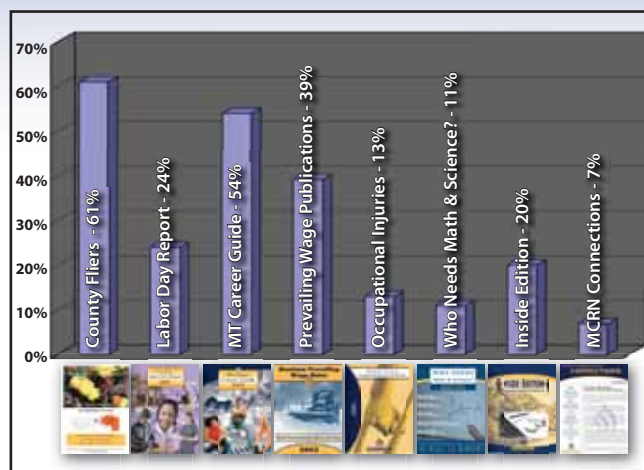
How often do you visit our Bureau’s website?

A full half of respondents said that they visit the website (www.ourfactsyourfuture.org) at least once a month, 18% reported one visit per week, and 3% visit every day. Only 2% reported never having visited the website, while 27% said they rarely visit it.

What other Research & Analysis Bureau publications do you use?

Well over half of EAG readers (61%) reported also using our County Fliers, which compile various economic and population statistics for select Montana counties. The Montana Career Guide proved second most popular with EAG readers, with 54% usage rate. This publication includes career development articles, as well as wages, projections, and growth rates for over 200 of Montana’s occupations. Other high-ranking publications included our prevailing wage publications (39%), the Labor Day Report (24%), and Inside Edition: A Job Hunting Guide for Montanans with Criminal Records (20%). The least popular publication was the Montana Career Resources Network (MCRN) Connections Newsletter (7%), which is not surprising, given the specialized nature of the publication.

Figure 4.



In what format do you prefer to read Economy at a Glance?

The majority of readers who took part in the survey prefer to read the EAG online (30%), while 28% download the publication and print themselves a hard copy to read. On the other hand, 19% of readers preferred to have the EAG mailed to them, and 18% wanted a mailed copy as well as an e-mailed link to the online version. The remaining 5% had no preference. Please keep in mind that the readers who downloaded the publication from our website had quicker access to the survey, which was conducted online, while those who read a mailed copy would have to take the extra step on visiting our website to take the survey. This may have skewed the question’s results somewhat.

Summary

The responses to the EAG survey were overwhelmingly positive, and we received many great suggestions for improvements and for articles readers would like to see. It seems that our featured articles are the publication’s most popular feature, while our monthly tables continue to be very important to many readers. Responses indicate that our selection of feature articles has been improving steadily over time, and we hope to continue moving in the right direction.

If you did not have the chance to take our online survey, but would like to make comments, suggest an article, or ask questions, don’t wait for the next survey. E-mail us at webmasterrad@mt.gov or write to us at P.O. Box 1728, Helena MT 59624-1728. We’d love to hear from you.



Multiple Jobholding in Montana

By Brad Eldredge, Ph.D.

You may have heard that many Montanans need to hold more than one job to make ends meet. While that is a common perception, does it reflect the reality of Montana's employment situation? Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey (CPS) reveal that Montana does have a high rate of multiple jobholding. In 2004, Montana was tied with Wyoming for the 3rd highest multiple jobholding rate in the nation, with an estimated 9.0% of the state's employed population reporting more than one job. This rate marks a 0.5% increase from the previous year, but remains below its peak of 10.6% in 1998. In 1999, Montana was tied with North Dakota for the highest rate of multiple jobholding in the nation.

These statistics raise the question: Why is Montana's multiple jobholding rate so high? Unfortunately, the limited size of the CPS survey does not allow us to examine the characteristics of Montana's multiple jobholders, but perhaps a look at national characteristics can give us some insight.

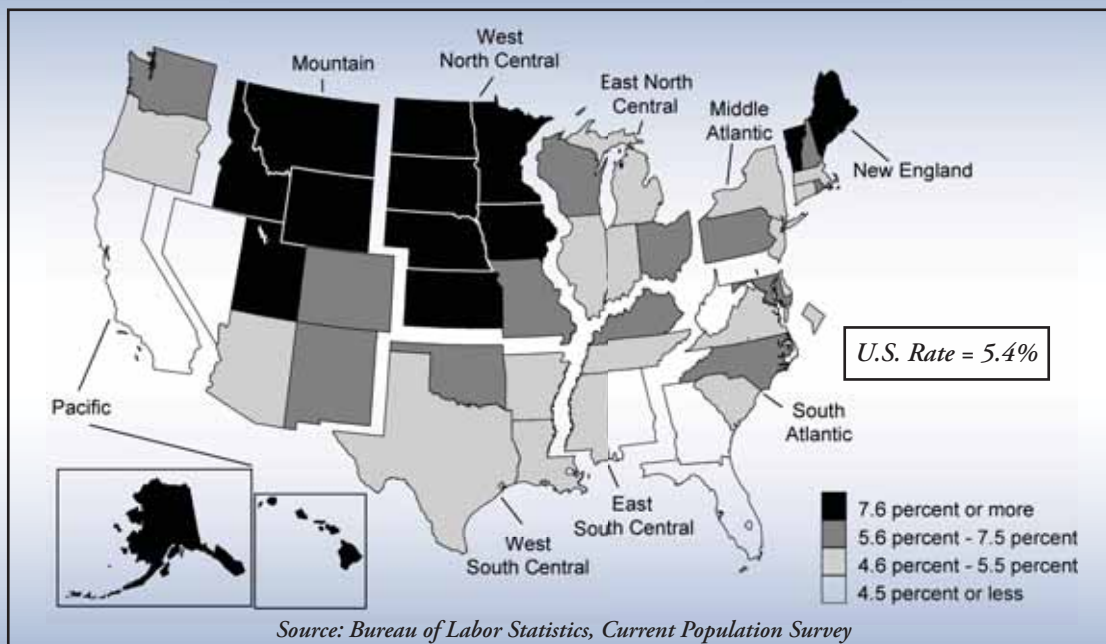
Nationally, women have a higher multiple jobholding rate than men (5.6% vs. 5.1%). In 2004, women comprised 47.6% of employed individuals in Montana, giving the state a national ranking of 14th highest in terms of the percentage of working women. It is possible that this above average number of women in the labor force contributes to the state's high multiple jobholding rate.

Young people, specifically 20-24 years olds, have the highest rates of multiple jobholding nationally. Could this also be a factor in Montana's high rate? The numbers indicate that it probably isn't. Montana has a relatively older workforce, and 20-24 year olds account for only 9.3% of the state's employed labor force (37th nationally). Interestingly, North and South Dakota, the two states with higher multiple jobholding rates than Montana, ranked in the top 5 states for percentage of employed workers in this age group.

There is a geographic pattern to multiple jobholding rates (as illustrated in Figure 1 on the back page), with the highest rates concentrated in the northern plains and Rockies and the lowest rates in the south. A 1997 study by the USDA's Economic Research Service found that multiple jobholding rates were highest in nonmetro areas.¹ They found that nonmetro residents in the lowest and highest earnings quintiles (fifths) had the highest rates of multiple jobholding. This suggests that some rural workers take two jobs just to get by, while others take two jobs because their specialized skills and knowledge are in high demand. The authors also found that farmers were very likely to have a second job. The comparatively rural and agricultural nature of the northern plains and Rockies in general, and Montana in particular, probably explains why Montana has high rates of multiple jobholding.

¹Bowers and Hamrick (1997) "Nonmetro Multiple Jobholding Rate Higher than Metro," *Rural Conditions and Trends*, Vol. 8 No. 2.

**Figure 1: Multiple Jobholding Rates by State
2004 annual averages**



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